

REMARKS

This Response is being filed within three months of the Office Action outstanding, dated December 23, 2004. No new claims have been added. Accordingly, no fee is required.

In the Office Action dated December 23, 2004, the Examiner rejected independent claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Juan. The Examiner stated that "The prior art fails to teach that in each vacuum zone, the level of vacuum force increases in the direction from the downstream end to the upstream end." Applicant has amended claim 13 to include this limitation. Accordingly, Applicant believes independent claim 13 is in condition for allowance and Applicant respectfully requests the same.

In the Office Action dated December 23, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1-16 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patent as allegedly being unpatentable over claims 1-7 of U.S. patent No. 6,679,602. The cited patent is commonly owned with this application. Applicant submits herewith a Terminal Disclaimer to overcome the double patenting rejection.

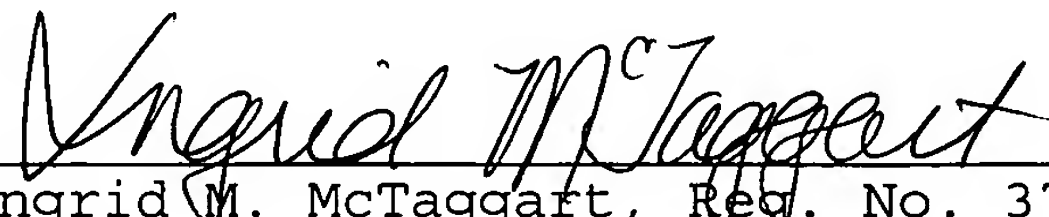
Accordingly, Applicant believes claims 1-16 are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests the same.

In the Office Action dated December 23, 2004, the Examiner stated that claims 17-20 are allowed. In the reasons for allowance, the Examiner stated "The prior art fails to teach that in each vacuum zone, the level of vacuum force increases in the direction from the downstream end to the upstream end." This limitation has been incorporated into amended claim 13, as discussed above.

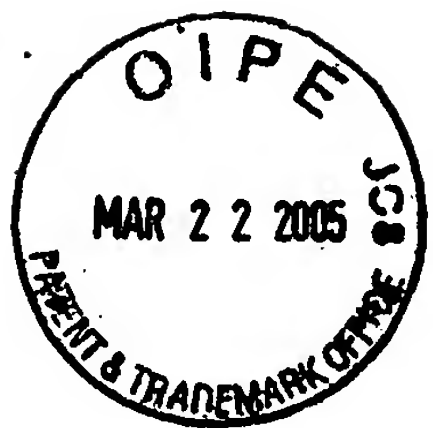
Conclusion

All pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner should have any questions regarding this response, a call to Applicant's counsel, Ms. Ingrid M. McTaggart at (503) 230-7934, is respectfully requested. If the Examiner should have any other questions regarding the above referenced application, a call to Applicant's counsel Mr. Bob Wasson at (360) 212-2338, is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent via first class mail with sufficient postage in an envelope addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 18th day of March, 2005.

Ingrid McTaggart